

MASTER OF
KUNG FU

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MARVEL COMICS GROUP



THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI,

MASTER OF KUNG FU

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**THIS IS THE
MOMENT
EARTH DIES!
ONLY SHANG-
CHI CAN
PREVENT IT,
BUT--**

I-I CANNOT
SHOOT...!

I CANNOT
KILL MY
OWN FATHER...
FU MANCHU!



"Call me Shang-Chi, as my **father** did, when he raised me and molded my mind and my body in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. I learned many things from my father. Since then, I have learned that my father is **Dr. Fu Manchu**, the most insidiously evil man on earth...and that to **honor** him would bring nothing but **dishonor** to the spirit of my **name**.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **MASTER OF KUNG FU!**™

Featuring supporting characters created by SAX ROHMER

DOUG MOENCH * PAUL GULACY * MIKE ESPOSITO * J. COSTANZA, letterer * A. GOODWIN
WRITER ARTIST INKER J. COHEN, colorist EDITOR

PART VI (FU MANCHU): THE DREAMSLAYER!

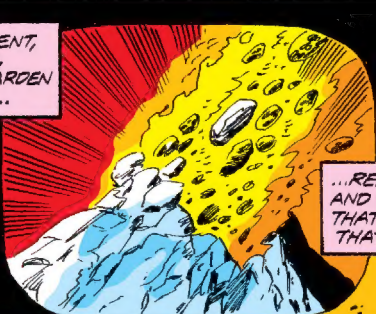
EXCERPTS FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF DR. FU MANCHU:

IT WAS MY DREAM. CONCEIVED IN WAKING MOMENTS OF INSPIRATION,
EXECUTED IN A DARK COLD WORLD OF HARSH REALITY, AND CONDEMNED
AS EVIL BY THOSE WHO CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND SUCH THINGS... IT
WAS NEVERTHELESS MY DREAM.

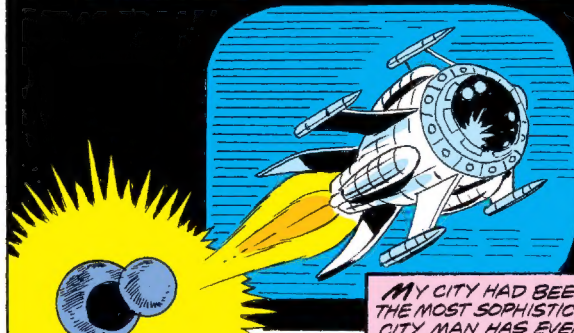




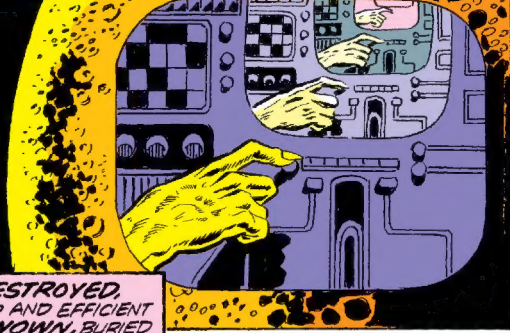
IT WAS A **LONELY** MOMENT,
A TIME OF **REFLECTION**,
STANDING THERE IN A GARDEN
AMONG THE **STARS**...



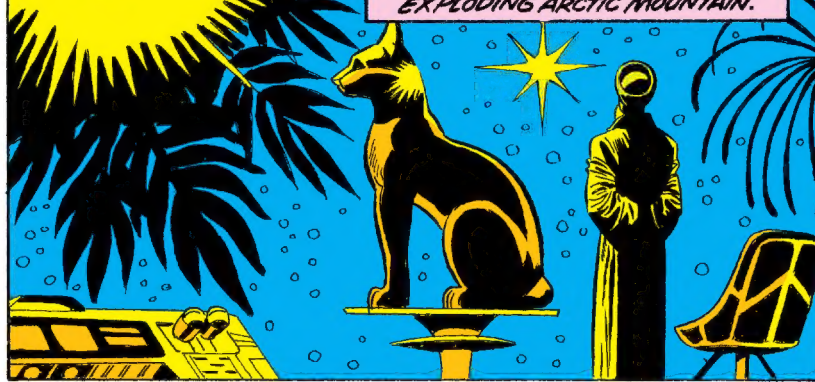
...REMEMBERING HOW
AND WHY I **CAME** TO
THAT **LONELINESS**,
THAT **MOMENT**.



MY CITY HAD BEEN **DESTROYED**.
THE MOST **SOPHISTICATED** AND **EFFICIENT**
CITY MAN HAS EVER **KNOWN**, BURIED
UNDER THE **ICY RUBBLE** OF AN
EXPLODING ARCTIC MOUNTAIN.



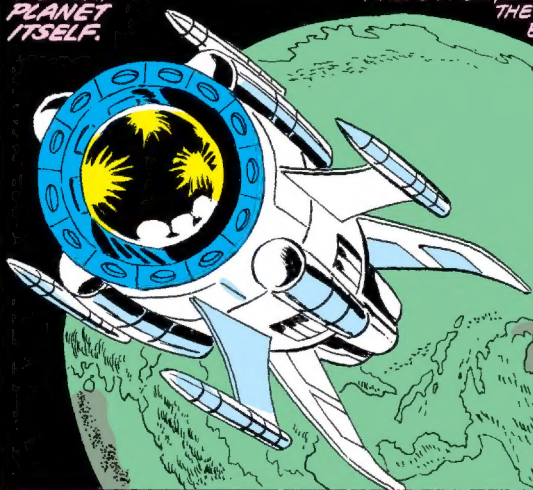
BUT IT MATTERED **LITTLE**.
A **LOSS**, AND NOTHING
MORE--**STRUCTURES**,
TECHNOLOGY, **MEN**. I **NEEDED**
NONE OF THEM ANY
LONGER.



FOR, I HAD **ESCAPED**
MY CITY... **ESCAPED** THAT
MOUNTAIN OF **COLLAPSING**
RUBBLE...

... **ESCAPED**
THE VERY
PLANET
ITSELF.

NOW ONLY THE **FUTURE** LAY
AHEAD. NOW, **LOOMING** FROM
THE **IMMENSE**
BLACKNESS,
ONLY **DESTINY**
AWAITED.

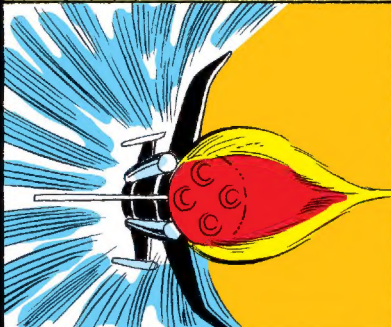


I **HURTTED CLOSER** TO THAT **DESTINY**, TO ITS **FINAL PHASE**... **KNOWING**
THAT AS THE **WORLD** FELL **SMALLER** AND MORE **INSIGNIFICANT** BEHIND
ME, ITS **IMPORTANCE GREW**. AND SO, TOO, DID **MINE**...



EXPECTANCY, AND GREAT ANTICIPATION, AS AWE-SOME AS THE VERY UNIVERSE--THOSE WERE MY FEELINGS AS THE ROCKET FELL INTO THE MOON'S ORBIT...

... AS I WAS GRIPPED AND HELD FAST BY THE VAST STRENGTH OF THAT WHICH I WOULD SOON DESTROY.



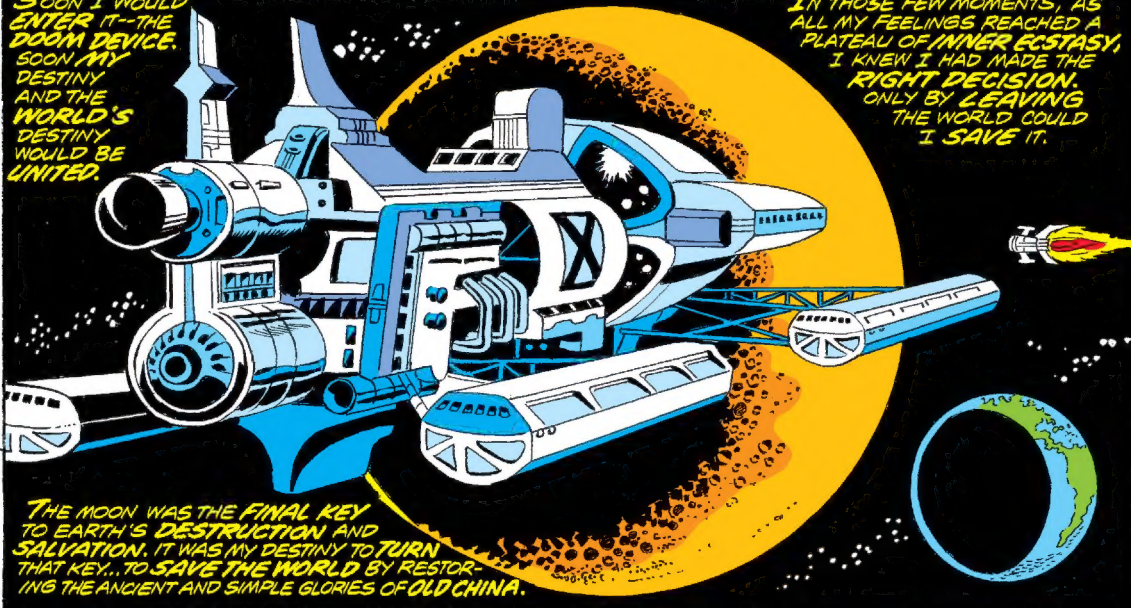
A SENSE OF GLORY--MAJESTIC GLORY--CROWNED THOSE FEELINGS, AS THE ROCKETS FIRED, THRUSTING ME FASTER ALONG THE PATH OF ORBIT...

...CARRYING ME AROUND THE GLITTERING, CRATERED SURFACE OF THE SATELLITE, TO ITS DARK SIDE...



...WITHIN SIGHT OF THE PORTAL, OPENING TO RECEIVE ME.

SOON I WOULD ENTER IT--THE DOOM DEVICE. SOON MY DESTINY AND THE WORLD'S DESTINY WOULD BE UNITED.



IN THOSE FEW MOMENTS, AS ALL MY FEELINGS REACHED A PLATEAU OF INNER ECSTASY, I KNEW I HAD MADE THE RIGHT DECISION. ONLY BY LEAVING THE WORLD COULD I SAVE IT.

THE MOON WAS THE FINAL KEY TO EARTH'S DESTRUCTION AND SALVATION. IT WAS MY DESTINY TO TURN THAT KEY... TO SAVE THE WORLD BY RESTORING THE ANCIENT AND SIMPLE GLORIES OF OLD CHINA.

AFTER ALL, I WAS IMMORTAL. ONLY I COULD GUIDE THE WORLD INTO AN ENDLESS FUTURE--BEFORE IT DESTROYED ITSELF, AND RENDERED IMMORTALITY MEANINGLESS.

YES, TWO DESTINIES HAD BEEN UNITED.



I WOULD LEAVE THE ROCKET NOW, TO ENTER THE DOOM DEVICE IN PERSON, AND GO TO THE FORWARD DECK...

...TO MY LIVING QUARTERS, WHERE I WOULD STAND IN A GARDEN AMONG THE STARS, SAVORING A LONG, LONELY MOMENT OF REFLECTION...



...IN THE LAST MOMENTS PRECEDING DESTINY.



I WAS RIGHT, CHI. WE'VE DOCKED IN SOME KIND OF SPACE STATION.

HE'S GONE NOW, ALONG WITH THE OTHER PASSENGERS, SO THIS PARTICULAR STOWAWAY--



--IS GOING TO STRETCH HIS CRAMPED LEGS, EVEN IF IT'S NOT NOW OR NEVER--

HOLD IT! THERE'S A BUNCH OF SPACE-AGE SI-FAN UP AHEAD--PROBABLY COMING TO UNLOAD THE ROCKET!



YOU THREE-- COME WITH ME TO THE BIO-LAB.

IT IS TIME FOR SHAKA KHARN'S IMMERSION IN CELESTIAL FU MANCHU'S NUTRIENT FLUIDS.

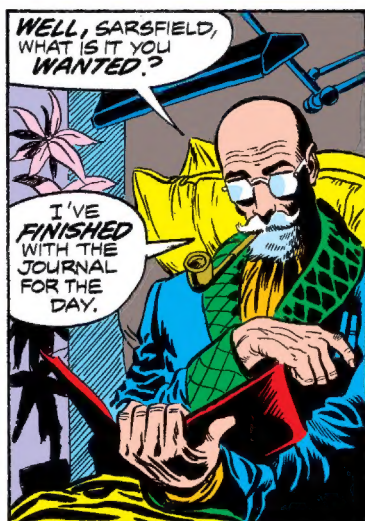
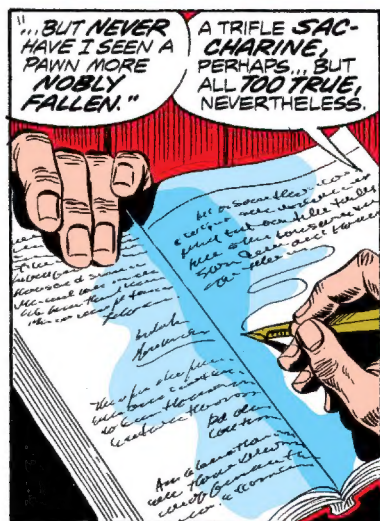
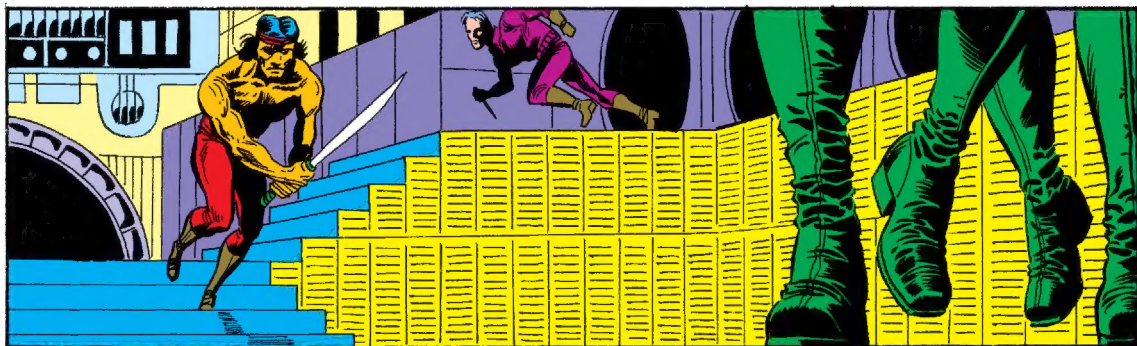


ONLY TWO IN THIS DIRECTION, RESTON.

BUT REMEMBER. THERE MUST BE NO LOUD SOUNDS--NO GUNFIRE.



RIGHT, CHI... AS SOON AS THESE FOUR GET OUT OF SIGHT.





WELL...I SUPPOSE I CAN'T SAY I DID NOT **EXPECT** SOMETHING LIKE THIS.

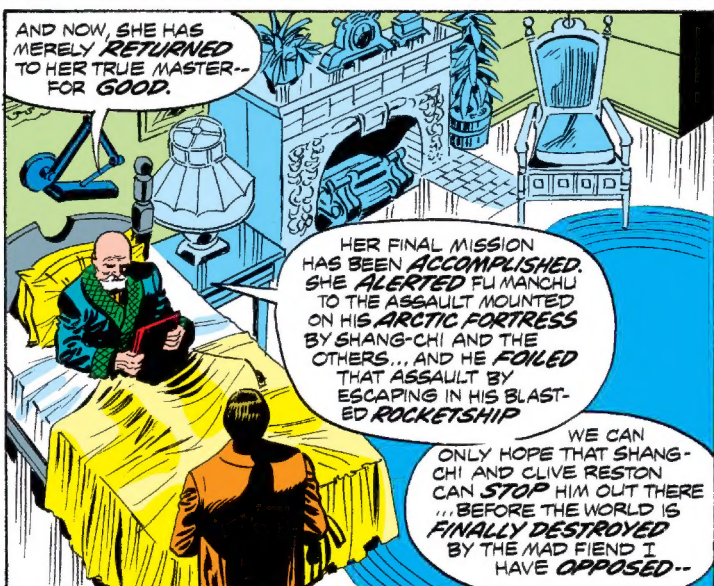
MEANING, SIR?

THERE WAS NO ABDUCTION INVOLVED, SARSFIELD...NOR ANY "**DEFECTION**," FOR THAT MATTER. DUCHARME NEVER **REALLY** SERVED US--THAT'S QUITE APPARENT **NOW**.



NO, SHE MERELY **PRETENDED** TO DO SO--PASSING ON TO US SEEMINGLY IMPORTANT BUT ACTUALLY **WORTHLESS** INFORMATION REGARDING HIS **ACTIVITIES**--

--ENABLING HIM TO KEEP AS CLOSE A **WATCH** ON ME AS I ON **HIM**.



AND NOW, SHE HAS MERELY **RETURNED** TO HER TRUE MASTER--FOR **GOOD**.

HER FINAL MISSION HAS BEEN **ACCOMPLISHED**. SHE **ALERTED** FU MANCHU TO THE ASSAULT MOUNTED ON HIS **ARCTIC FORTRESS** BY SHANG-CHI AND THE OTHERS...AND HE **FOILED** THAT ASSAULT BY ESCAPING IN HIS BLAST-ED **ROCKETSHIP**

WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT SHANG-CHI AND CLIVE RESTON CAN **STOP** HIM OUT THERE...BEFORE THE WORLD IS **FINALLY DESTROYED** BY THE MAD FIEND I HAVE **OPPOSED**--



"--FOR MORE THAN **FORTY YEARS**."

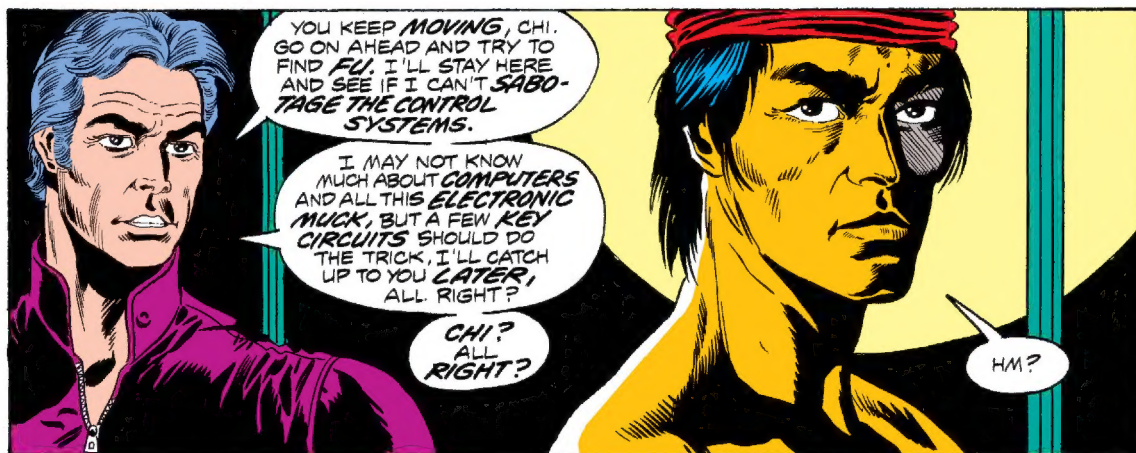
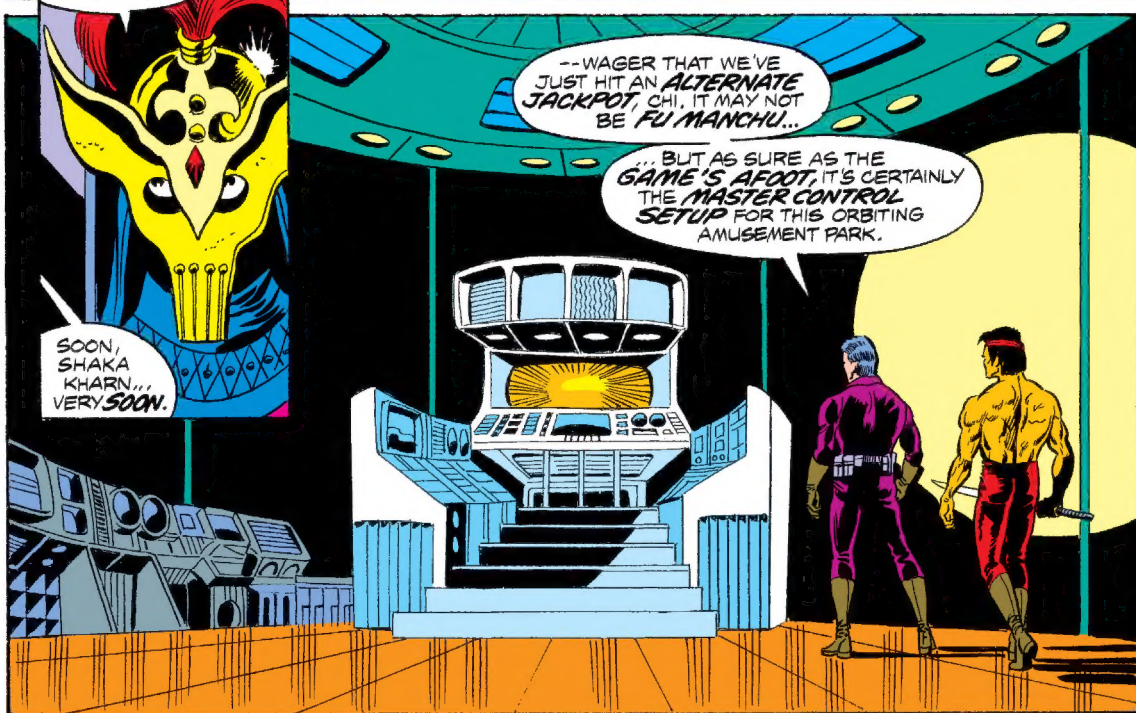
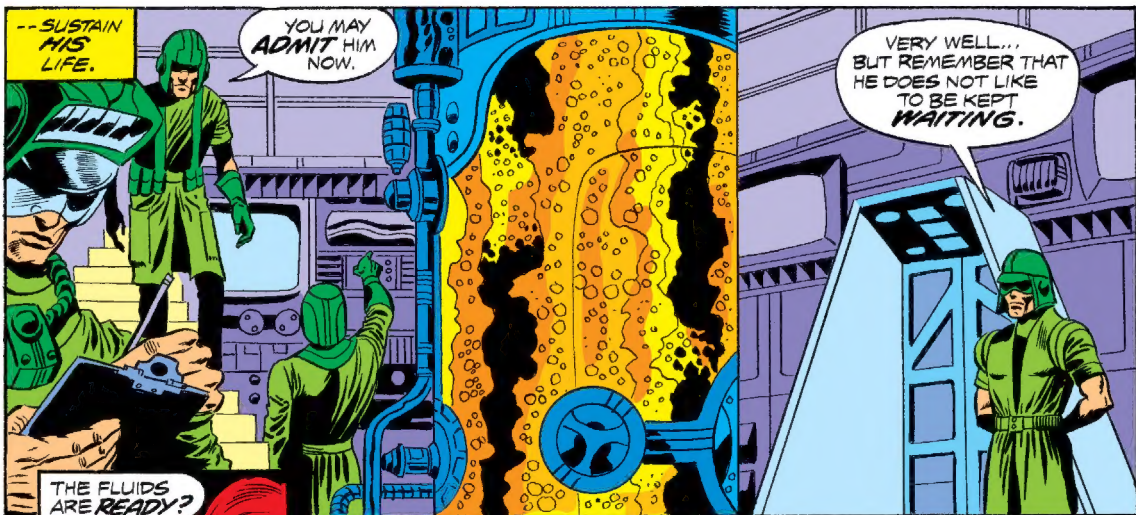
YOUR **ELIXIR**, CELESTIAL ONE?

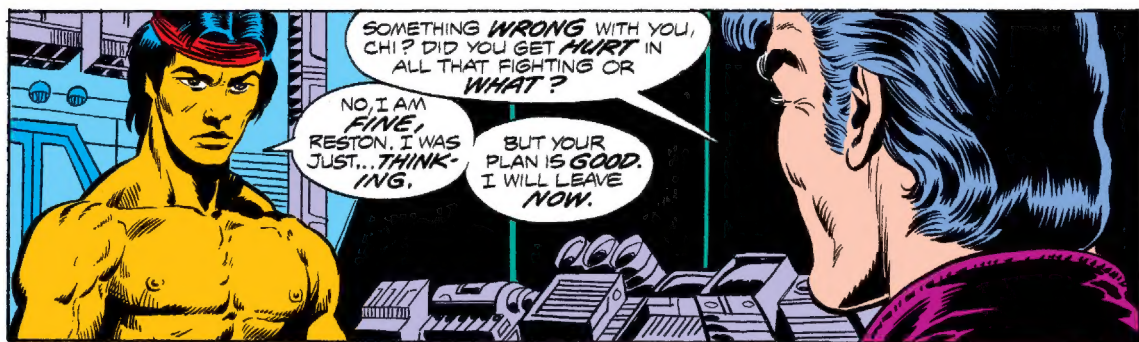


YES...**THANK** YOU, DUCHARME.

ALL THE INTERLOCKING SHAPES OF DESTINY **JOIN TOGETHER** NOW. IT IS AN IRONY THAT THE **ELIXIR VITAE** WAS DEVELOPED BY **SHAKA KHARN**, WHO IS BOTH MY **SLAIN ANCESTOR** AND MY **REBORN SON**.

FOR, JUST AS HIS **ELIXIR** PRESERVES **MY** LIFE AND YOUTH, SO TOO DOES MY **DISCOVERY** OF **NUTRIENT FLUIDS**--





I LEFT DUCHARME IN MY GARDEN AMONG THE STARS, THE BITTER TASTE OF IMMORTALITY STILL BURNING MY LIPS.

SOON IT WOULD BE TIME FOR SHAKA KHARN TO BATHE IN MY ARTIFICIAL NUTRIENT FLUIDS. I FELT A NEED TO VISIT HIM, AS HE RE-EXPERIENCED THE WARMTH OF MATERNAL BIRTH...

I GO NOW, DUCHARME, TO DISCUSS MY DREAMS WITH SHAKA KHARN, AS A FATHER SPEAKS TO HIS--



-- SON ?

DO NOT MOVE, MY FATHER.

I HAVE COME HERE TO STOP YOU.



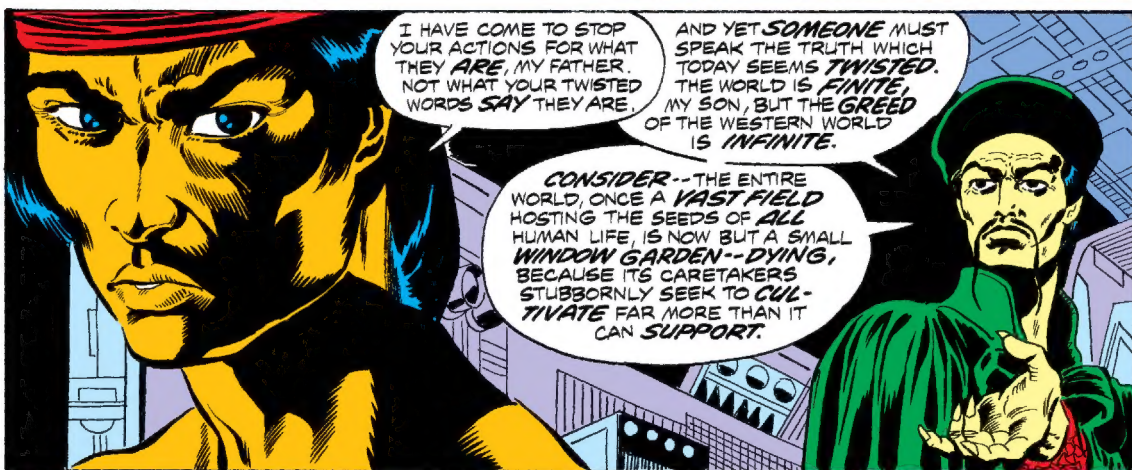
THEN YOU HAVE COME A LONG WAY, SHANG-CHI-- ALL THE WAY TO THE MOON. BUT TO STOP ME FROM WHAT? FROM PRESERVING THE GLORY OF HUMAN LIFE? FROM SAVING THE WORLD?



I HAVE COME TO STOP YOUR ACTIONS FOR WHAT THEY ARE, MY FATHER. NOT WHAT YOUR TWISTED WORDS SAY THEY ARE.

AND YET SOMEONE MUST SPEAK THE TRUTH WHICH TODAY SEEMS TWISTED. THE WORLD IS FINITE, MY SON, BUT THE GREED OF THE WESTERN WORLD IS INFINITE.

CONSIDER--THE ENTIRE WORLD, ONCE A VAST FIELD HOSTING THE SEEDS OF ALL HUMAN LIFE, IS NOW BUT A SMALL WINDOW GARDEN--DYING, BECAUSE ITS CARETAKERS STUBBORNLY SEEK TO CULTIVATE FAR MORE THAN IT CAN SUPPORT.



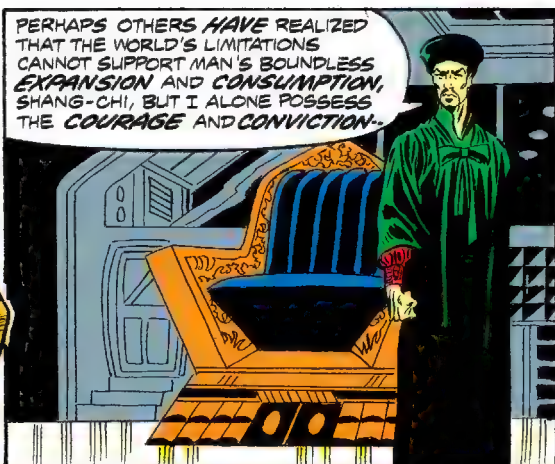
CONSIDER, TOO-- I ALONE, OF ALL THOSE WHO WIELD POWER ON EARTH, HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LOOK UPON THAT WINDOW GARDEN AND SEE IT FOR WHAT IT TRULY IS.

MY SIGHT IS THUS GREATER BECAUSE IT IS LESS--BECAUSE IT IS CONFINED TO THE LIMITS OF INEVITABLE TRUTH.





YOU ARE NOT BLESSED WITH **EXCLUSIVE SIGHT**, MY FATHER. **OTHERS** HAVE LOOKED BEYOND TODAY, AND HAVE FACED THE **SAME FUTURE**.

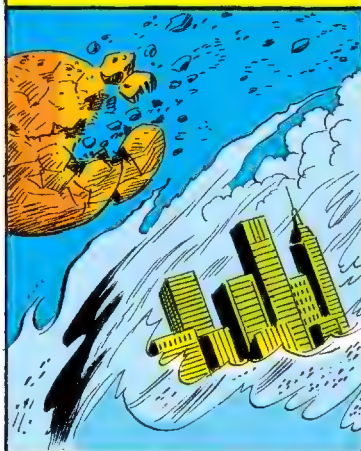


PERHAPS **OTHERS** HAVE REALIZED THAT THE WORLD'S LIMITATIONS CANNOT SUPPORT MAN'S **BOUNDLESS EXPANSION AND CONSUMPTION**, SHANG-CHI, BUT I ALONE POSSESS THE **COURAGE AND CONVICTION**--

"--TO TAKE ACTION ON THAT REALIZATION..."



"...TO ENSURE THAT **MAN AND HIS WORLD**, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER..."



"...AGAIN ACHIEVE **MUTUAL BALANCE**."



"TRUE, THE **NUCLEAR DESTRUCTION OF THE MOON** WILL CREATE **UNPRECEDENTED CATASTROPHE** ON EARTH, IN THE FORM OF **TIDAL WAVES** AND **MASSIVE FLOODING**. BUT IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT TO **PRESERVE LIFE**, I MUST **DESTROY MANY**... AND THAT **MOST** OF THE SURVIVORS WILL BE THE PEOPLE OF **CHINA**. CAN ANYONE EXPECT OTHERWISE?"

TO DEFEAT THE SON WHO NOW WISHED TO **DISGRACE** ME, I WOULD HAVE NEED OF MY **NEW SON'S LOYALTY**.

THE NUTRIENT SOLUTION IS **READY**, GLORIOUS SHAKA KARN. IF WE MAY AID YOU WITH YOUR **ARMOR**?



THUS, I WAS CAREFUL THAT SHANG-CHI DID NOT SEE ME PRESS THE **BUTTON**--



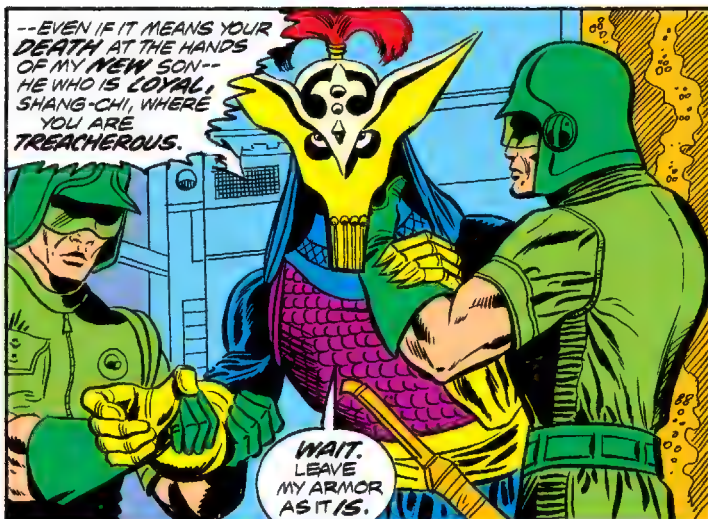
--WHICH ENABLED ME TO SPEAK TO **BOTH** OF MY SONS, IN A **SINGLE VOICE**.

AND IS MY "**DOOM DEVICE**" SO DIFFERENT FROM THE PRACTICES OF THE **WEST**? SCIENTISTS WORKING FOR THE **AMERICAN CIA**, IN COOPERATION WITH **YOUR ORGANIZATION**, MY SON--WITH **SMITH'S MI-6**-- HAVE ALREADY DEVELOPED **POISONS AND GASES**--

--FATAL ONLY TO THOSE WHO POSSESS **ORIENTAL GENES**.



SO YOU SEE, I CANNOT **ALLOW** YOU TO STOP ME, EVEN IF YOU **ARE** MY SON--



--EVEN IF IT MEANS YOUR DEATH AT THE HANDS OF MY NEW SON-- HE WHO IS LOYAL! SHANG-CHI, WHERE YOU ARE TREACHEROUS.

WAIT. LEAVE MY ARMOR AS IT IS.



YOU THINK I AM MAD, SHANG-CHI. MY PLAN TO RETURN FROM THE HEAVENS AND RULE A NEW WORLD OF MY CREATION--

--SUGGESTS A FIXATION WITH... GODHOOD...



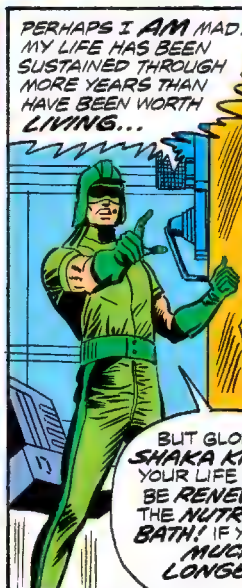
...BUT A DERANGED GODHOOD...

DONE... I HOPE.



...WHICH SEEKS TO ACHIEVE CREATION THROUGH DESTRUCTION.

NOW TO FIND CHI.



PERHAPS I AM MAD. MY LIFE HAS BEEN SUSTAINED THROUGH MORE YEARS THAN HAVE BEEN WORTH LIVING...

BUT GLORIOUS SHAKA KHARN-- YOUR LIFE MUST BE RENEWED IN THE NUTRIENT BATH! IF YOU WAIT MUCH LONGER--



SHANG-CHI STILL LIVES. I HAVE FAILED MY FATHER. I MUST GO, NOW, AND AMEND THAT FAILURE.

SILENCE! I MUST GO TO MY FATHER-- AND SLAY SHANG-CHI!



AND TO ONE WHO IS IMMORTAL, SHANG-CHI, WHO IS SUPREMELY JADE-- WHAT IS LEFT, BESIDES GODHOOD?

I WARN YOU, MY FATHER-- I WILL ALLOW YOU TO COME NO FURTHER.

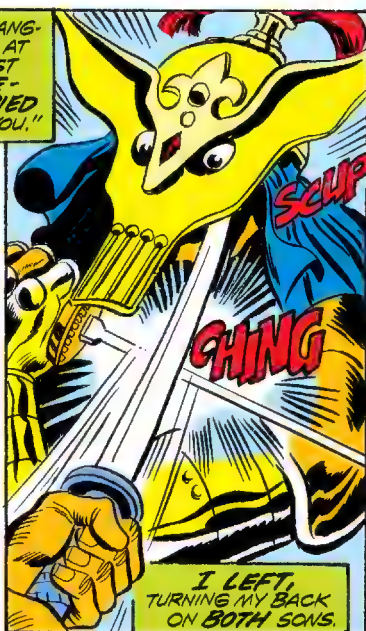
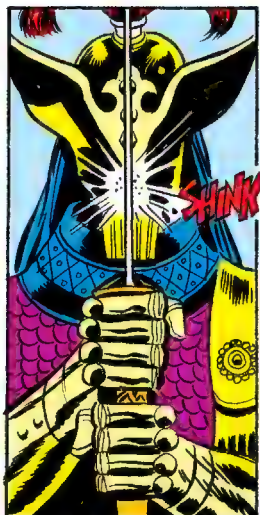
YOU WILL NOT STOP ME, MY SON. YOU KNOW THIS.

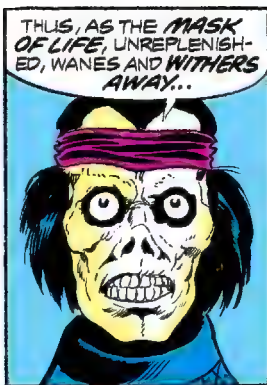
MAYBE NOT, BUT I WILL...



I'VE GOT A FATHER MYSELF, FU MANCHU, SO I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY CHI MIGHT HESITATE. BUT THE ONLY WORRY I HAVE AT THE MOMENT IS FOLLOWING IN MY FATHER'S FOOTSTE--

CHANK







NO...



I CANNOT
ALLOW YOU TO
**SLAY ME
TWICE!** NOT
WHILE I STILL--



--LIVE?

I WAS NOT AT ALL **SURPRISED**
THAT SHANG-CHI SURVIVED
HIS **FIRST** CONFRON-
TATION WITH
SHAKA KHARN.



NOR WOULD IT
SURPRISE ME
IF THE **SECOND**
CONFRONTATION
RESULTED IN
SHAKA KHARN'S
ACTUAL DEFEAT.



AFTER ALL, EVEN THOUGH
I HAVE **DISOWNED** HIM,
SHANG-CHI IS **STILL...**
MY SON.



I MUST EXPECT SUCH
THINGS... AND COMPEN-
SATE FOR THEM.



AND SO I GO TO THE HEART
OF MY DOOM DEVICE, TO
CULMINATE MY DESTINY,
SOONER THAN **PLANNED,**
BUT JUST AS **FULLY.**

THE TOUCH
OF A SINGLE
ALL POWERFUL
SWITCH AND--

HOLD.



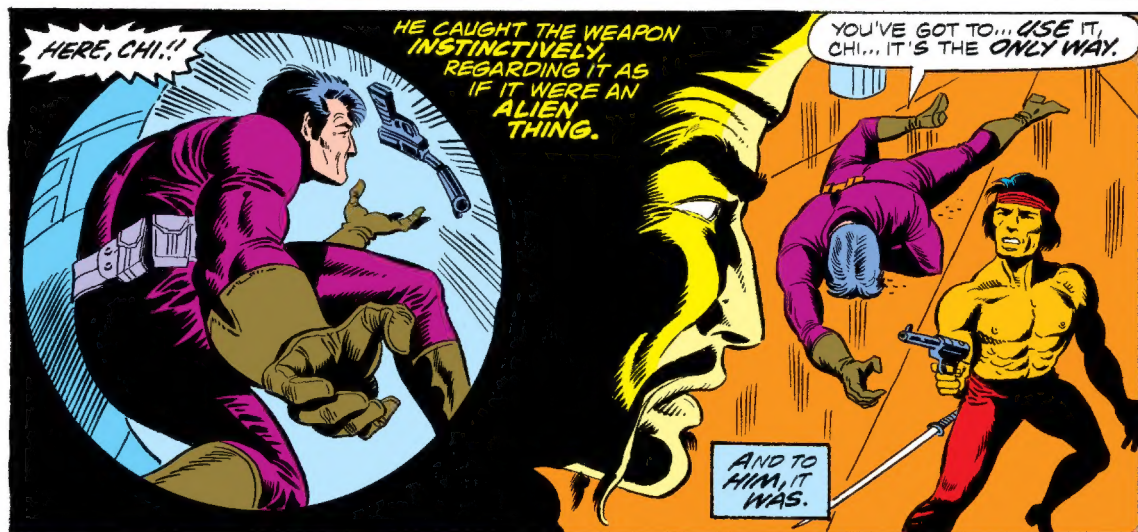
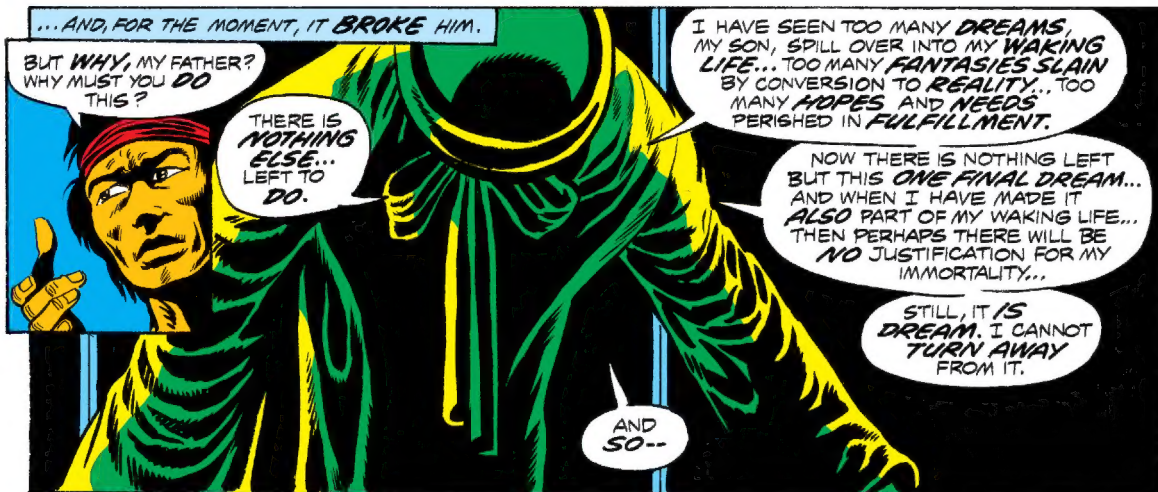
YOUR LIFE
IS NOT WORTH
TWO WORLDS,
MY FATHER.

YOUR VICTORY OVER MY
LABORATORY CREATED
OFFSPRING CAUSES ME
TO SIGH, SHANG-CHI. IT
IS, PERHAPS, **SYMBOLIC**
OF MY ONE **WEAKNESS--**

I HAVE RELIED TOO MUCH
ON THE **ARTIFICIAL--** ON
CREATIONS AND
DEVICES-- AND TOO
LITTLE OF THE
NATURAL ORDER.

BUT THE **FINAL** VICTORY
SHALL YET BE **MINE,** FOR I
CAN **ACTIVATE** MY NUCLEAR DOOM
DEVICE LONG BEFORE YOU CAN
CROSS THE ROOM TO **STOP** ME.

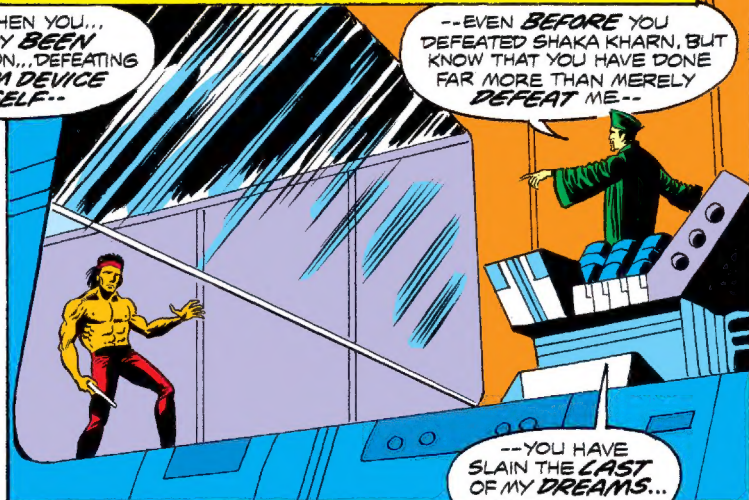
HE **KNEW**
IT WAS TRUE...



IN RESPONSE TO THE MALFUNCTION, AND AS PREVIOUSLY ENGINEERED, THE HERMETICALLY SEALING GLASS PARTITION INSTANTLY SLID INTO PLACE-- DIVIDING THE CONTROL ROOM INTO ITS MODULAR COMPONENTS...

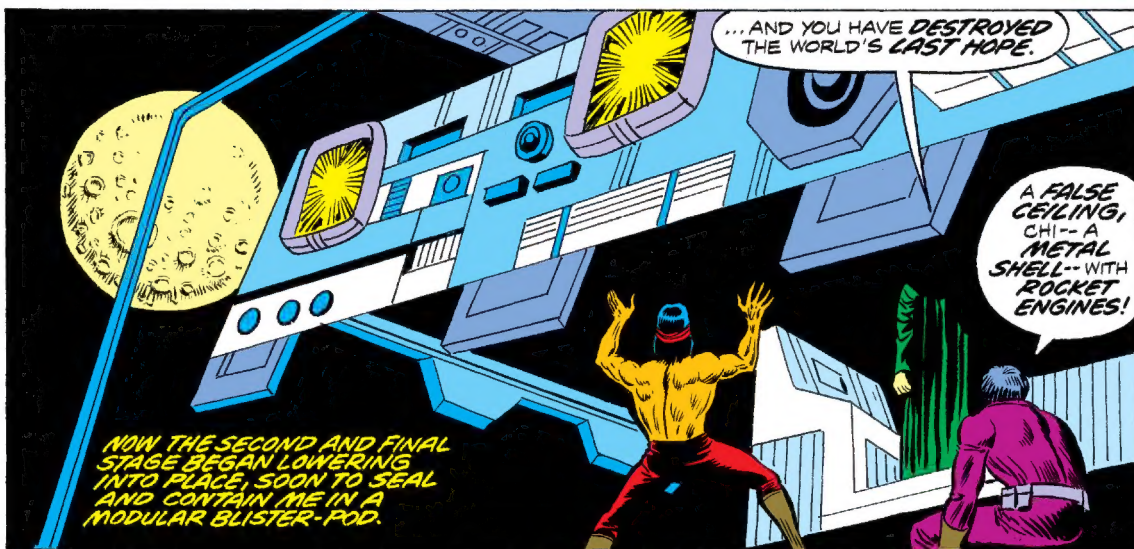


THEN YOU...
HAVE ALREADY *BEEN*
HERE, MY SON... DEFEATING
THE DOOM DEVICE
ITSELF--



--EVEN *BEFORE* YOU
DEFEATED SHAKA KHARN, BUT
KNOW THAT YOU HAVE DONE
FAR MORE THAN MERELY
DEFEAT ME--

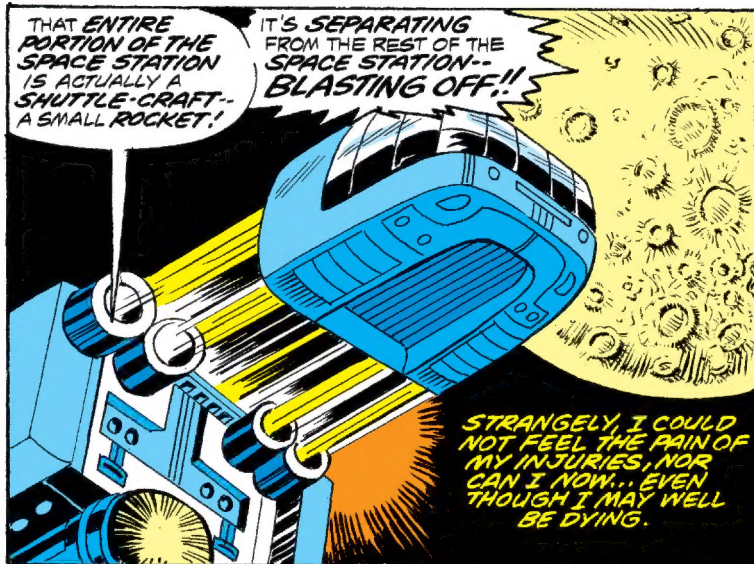
--YOU HAVE
SLAIN THE *LAST*
OF MY DREAMS...



...AND YOU HAVE *DESTROYED*
THE WORLD'S *LAST* HOPE.

A FALSE
CEILING,
CHI-- A
METAL
SHELL-- WITH
ROCKET
ENGINES!

NOW THE SECOND AND FINAL
STAGE BEGAN LOWERING
INTO PLACE, SOON TO SEAL
AND CONTAIN ME IN A
MODULAR BLISTER-POD.



THAT ENTIRE
PORTION OF THE
SPACE STATION
IS ACTUALLY A
SHUTTLE-CRAFT--
A SMALL ROCKET!

IT'S SEPARATING
FROM THE REST OF THE
SPACE STATION--
BLASTING OFF!!

STRANGELY, I COULD
NOT FEEL THE PAIN OF
MY INJURIES, NOR
CAN I NOW... EVEN
THOUGH I MAY WELL
BE DYING.



THEN... THE *FORMATION*
OF THAT SHUTTLE-CRAFT MUST
HAVE BEEN *AUTOMATICALLY*
ACTIVATED, CHI-- BY THE
FAILURE OF HIS CONTROLS,
THANKS TO MY *SABOTAGE*.

IF SOMETHING WENT
WRONG, HE MADE
SURE HE'D *ESCAPE--*
IMMEDIATELY.



BUT AT LEAST
HIS ESCAPE WON'T
DO HIM ANY **GOOD**.
FU MANCHU IS
FINALLY **DEAD**...

...OR SOON
WILL BE.

PERHAPS, RESTON...
AND PERHAPS **ALL**
OF LIFE WILL SOON
BE **DEAD**...

HUH--? WHAT'S
THAT SUPPOSED
TO MEAN?

"PERHAPS MY FATHER
WAS... **RIGHT**."

AND NOW, AS I
RECORD THIS NARRATIVE
FOR TRANSCRIPTION TO
MY NOTEBOOKS, EITHER
IT WILL SOON END FOR
ME... OR IT WILL ALL
BEGIN ANEW...

...A LONG SLOW
PROCESS WHICH MAY
REQUIRE A DOZEN
YEARS OR A HUNDRED...

...BUT THEN, A HUNDRED-
THOUSAND YEARS ARE NO
MORE THAN A NORMAL
MAN'S SINGLE DREAM...
TO DOCTOR FU MANCHU.

STILL, EVEN IF IT DOES
BEGIN ANEW, AFTER THIS
LONG LONELY JOURNEY
THROUGH COLD DARKNESS,
I SUSPECT NONE OF US
WILL EVER AGAIN SEE THE
LIKES OF WHAT HAS GONE
BEFORE, AND WHAT NOW
COMES TO...

...AN END.

**NEXT:
ISSUE:**

THE EXPLOSIVE FINAL
WRAP-UP, AND A
BLOCKBUSTIN' IN--
NEW BEGINNING

**EPILOGUE: BRASS
AND BLACKNESS
(A DEATH MOVE)**

MISSIVES TO THE MASTER!

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Dear Marvel,

Magnificent. That single word sums up my initial impressions of MASTER OF KUNG FU #s 44 and 45. The six-part Fu Manchu epic promises to be a pinnacle of excellence in an already excellent series. In fact, as much as I love other titles in the Marvel line, MASTER OF KUNG FU has been so exceptional, so dramatic, so true to its original concept and so "right" in its own unique evolution, that I would have to say it is the most outstanding comic magazine in the field today. The team of Doug Moench and Paul Gulacy is the Stan Lee and Jack Kirby of the 70's—and that's really saying something from a fan who has been with Marvel since the premiere issue of a certain fantastic foursome back in 1961.

Perhaps above all else it is the characters themselves who make this series so interesting. Shang-Chi is learning the sacred "art" of compromise. He who started out with such lofty idealism, where the battle lines between good and evil were so clearly delineated, is now learning to see the world in shades of grey—and it hurts. Smith's "games of deceit and death" have become the only means of conquering the evils from his past. Lately, the lines of worry have creased a face better suited to a more innocent demeanor. Perhaps he ponders the path onto which he has ventured, looks around at the people he calls "allies" and wonders if he, too, will eventually be like them. It is a horror born not of the present, but of an uncertain future. Perhaps, too, it is not that Chi has really lost his own lofty ideals, but rather that he suspects and fears that his father's—and now his sister's—ideals are even loftier and more determined. After all, it was he who broke away from a sacred heritage and, if anything, Smith learned his "games of deceit and death" from the master himself—Fu Manchu.

Nayland Smith has learned well, however. He is the fanatic who will do anything, whether it falls into categories of right or wrong, ethical or unethical, to achieve his goals. His hatred of Fu Manchu is his very fuel for living. True, he will go after others (such as Velcro, Mordillo, and Shen Kuei) with almost equal fervor, but who really doubts that in Smith's subconscious these others are nothing more than surrogate Fu Manchus? So is it any wonder that he feels no real emotion when he sends Shang-Chi on death-missions? It's all part of the game—Fu Manchu and surrogates must be squelched, at any cost. An interesting irony, however: As worldly wise and virtually psychic as Smith has been, the one man to whom he has given his full trust (a rare commodity in Smith's world)—Dr. Petrie—is now the man who has nearly killed him.

Clive Reston, a highly sensitive, delicately balanced individual, is now involved in a highly sensitive and unbalanced *menage a trois*. His love for Leiko is a part of him he can't bear to lose, and yet his equal but different love for Shang-Chi makes it all the more difficult for him to cope with. Lately he has been letting his emotions venture forth into territories previously reserved for professional detachment, and I firmly believe that the events transpiring toward the end of #45 made him lower his guard and get captured. Certainly the revelation that "Tarrant" was really Sir Herbert Griswold was shocking, but the first and most devastating shock was his realization that in a moment of crisis Leiko chose to save Shang-Chi first. As for Leiko, she is a woman in torment right now, simply because I don't really believe she *has* made her choice, and it will be interesting indeed to see how her emotions develop over the next few issues.

The other two principals, Larnier and Black Jack, are less easy to analyze. Black Jack, it would seem, is Smith's puppet. Not so. True, he is loyal, and loyalty comes first. True, his idealism is of

a more primitive and undefined variety than Shang-Chi's or even Reston's. But the seeds of discontent are beginning to sprout in #45, and the future promises surprise. As for Larnier, his bleak bitterness seems to stem more from a rather dim opinion of himself than from any real vendetta against Smith. In his heart, he probably knows that Smith had ample reasons for kicking him out of MI-6, and that the real cause of his personal turmoil has been himself. More really cannot be said at this stage—but the possibilities for future stories are tantalizingly infinite.

Sorry to bend your collective ears like this, but my admiration for your work on MOKF could not limit itself to just a few paragraphs. Let me conclude by saying thank you for your chronicle of the "rising and advancing of a spirit." I firmly believe that mine has advanced right along with it.

Achille David Di Bacco
1701 Terrace Drive West
Lake Worth, Florida 33461

Dead-on observations, Achille, and ones so precisely matching Doug's own conceptions of this book and its characters that the lad got an increasingly eerie feeling as he read through your letter—almost as if his brain were being tapped. Or so he claims, wont as he is to overdramatize such things. Anyway, he also says he wouldn't mind it a bit if we were to bestow upon you our special "Most Perceptive Letter of the Month" award...not to mention *longest*. So consider yourself so bestowed. And thanks.

Dear Son:

Your mother and I have been following your episodes in the periodical MASTER OF KUNG FU for some time now. To say the least, I am utterly dismayed. Although you have performed with some honour against Her Majesty's foes, your continued foolishness in regard to Miss Wu can only be termed an unfounded obsession. It's obvious that she loves the Chinese, and trailing after her like a blind puppy is pure fantasy on your part. As you well know, there were many women whom I loved and lost during my duty with the Service before I met your mother (who still has a lovely bottom, by the way), and as I have often cautioned you to remember, at night all cats are grey. It's high time you cultivated an outside interest. Sir Denis' secretary, for instance, seems quite appealing. If another woman is not available, however, I would suggest a double martini, stirred, not shaken, at approximately 32 degrees centigrade, to help you forget your troubles. In regards to your knowledge of tradecraft, I detect a certain heroic quality in your behaviour. Beware of this; the Chinese is far better equipped than you, and usually saves you from embarrassment. My motto has always been: When in doubt, cheat. An electric fan tossed into the bathtub, for instance, quells the most violent attack. Sneakiness is next to godliness in tradecraft. Use your wits more, your fists less. I trust I have made myself clear. Live and let die and all that. I'm certain that if your great-uncle were still alive, he would find your fighting techniques most "elementary." In future, I trust you will uphold the family honour in better style. Your mother loves you, and wishes you well.

Sir James Bond
Lilthington House
Lilthington Near Polgate
Sussuex, Alfriston, 457

Clive says: "Thanks, even though you *are* an imposter." But just in case you're not, remember...*he* said it. We didn't.

In fact, Sir James, all *we've* got to say is...be good.